GIS-aided route 'posters' to guide BMTC commuters

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BANGALORE: Confused about which bus to take when it comes to going to a new place in the City? Or, unsure about the route the bus you've boarded will take?

Well, these and many other questions that nag commuters using Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation buses, will shortly be answered with the BMTC displaying route 'posters', using route Geographical Information System (GIS), at all City bus stops. The posters will show the bus numbers that stop at the stand, their destinations, the route map and their arrival/departure timings
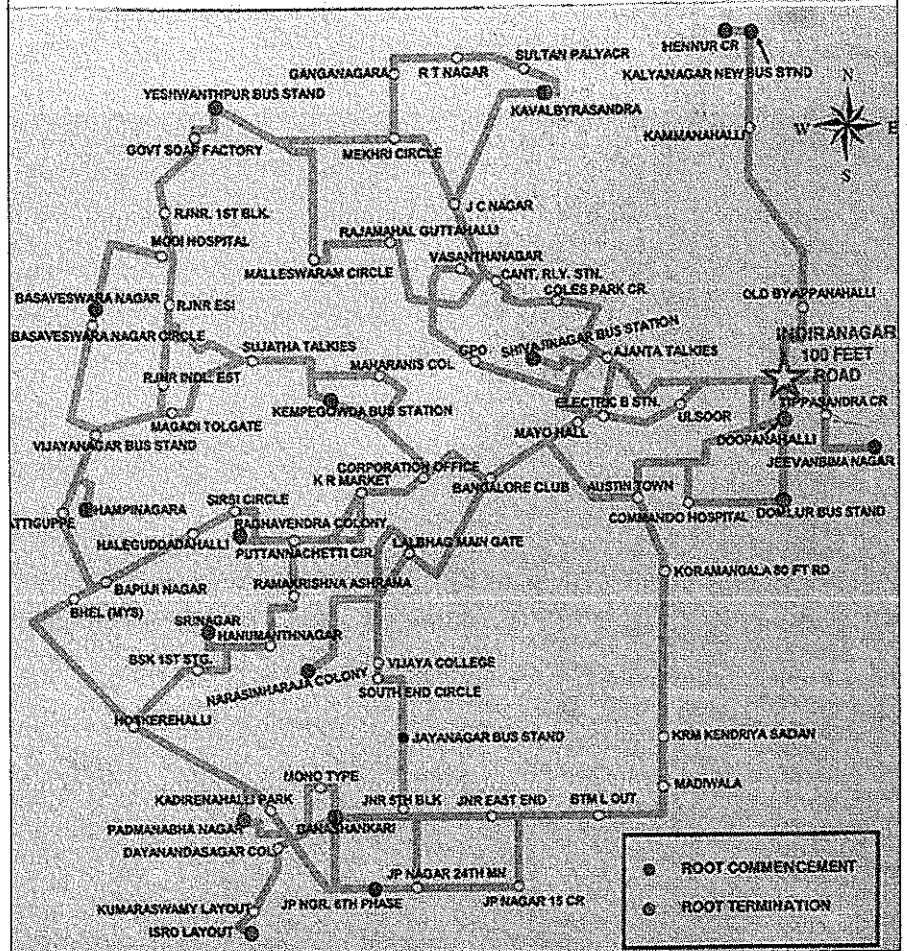
The bilingual posters (in Kannada and English), developed using GIS, will be put up at all the 2,000-odd stops in Bangalore by early 2007.

"For Phase 1, we've identified 40 stops on core routes, on which the posters will be put up within a fortnight," says BMTC Managing Director Upendra Tripathy. These include the stops at ISKCON temple, Rajajinagar, Shankarmath, Banashankhari, CMH Road, Ulsoor, Cunnigham Road, Shivananda Road, Tata Institute and Ramakrishna Ashram.

Tenders would be invited from private firms to participate in the process. "The selected firms will put up the posters and maintain them for three years. They will be required to change them once in six months," he adds.

BMTC has outsourced work on the posters to Navayuga Spatial Technology Pvt Ltd. "The project was initiated by Mr Tripathy two months ago. There are 2,000 bus stops in Bangalore but there are no GIS applications anywhere giving passengers route information," says Mr Mukund Rao, CEO of Navyuga.

First in country

"We took the road map of the City and put all the stops on it We got the trip database from BMTC, along with information about bus timings and routes We developed a GIS-based application software with whose help we are working on the poster. This is the first such project in the country," he adds.

While the posters are going to help passengers, one obvious question is whether the hardly-ever-on-time BMTC buses will be able to keep the timings. "We try our best to stick to the schedules but cannot rule out delays, given the traffic on the roads," says Mr Tripathy.

"Passengers can use these posters to demand that buses stick to their schedules. In the West, GIS is used to make transport and administration transparent and accountable. Keeping to the time schedule will be a big challenge for the BMTC," adds Mr Mukund The posters apart, efforts are on to put the GIS route on the web. "People will be able to log on to the website for details of buses and their routes. We are working on it," added Mr Tripathy.

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Route map shown in the poster